



Natural Resources Conservation Service  
375 Jackson Street, Suite 600  
St. Paul, MN 55101-1854

Phone (651) 602-7900  
Fax: (651) 602-7914

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**For Immediate News Release**

October 25, 2005

For more information contact:  
Julie MacSwain, State Public Affairs Specialist  
USDA-NRCS  
Phone: (651)-602-7859

**Conservation Security Program an opportunity for Agricultural Producers**

**SAINT PAUL, MN, October 17, 2005** – The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has an exciting new program for conservation minded farmers and ranchers. The Conservation Security Program (CSP) rewards the best stewards with financial incentives. As a voluntary program, participation is open to all producers who have practiced good stewardship on their agricultural lands and provides additional incentives for those who want to do more. Working lands include cropland, grassland, improved pasture, range land, orchards, and vineyards as well as forested land that is incidental to part of an operation. Other examples of land which may be eligible for possible CSP enrollment include but it not limited to wild rice, strawberries and pumpkins.

This year, Minnesota's agricultural producers within the Red Lakes and Thief Watersheds are eligible for the 2006 CSP program. Only those producers with the majority of their land in one of these watersheds, Red Lakes and or Thief CSP watersheds are eligible to apply.

To apply, producers are required to complete a Self-Assessment Workbook to determine on their own whether or not they are likely to be eligible for the program. The workbook should be completed prior to setting up an appointment with NRCS to sign-up for the program. The CSP Self-Assessment Workbook includes questions to verify stewardship practices.

For more information about technical assistance and conservation programs, contact the local USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service office, listed in the phone book under U.S. Department of Agriculture or go to <http://www.mn.nrcs.usda.gov>

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